

Remarks

The Examiner has indicated that claims 5, 6, 8, 10, 21, 26 and 27 are allowable, and that is gratefully acknowledged. However, it is believed that all claims are allowable, and the Applicants submit the following remarks in support of all remaining claims.

In response to the Examiner's citation of Lahat et al (US Patent 6,417,944) the Applicants highlight that the present invention relates to a star-coupler, with the particular feature of coupling light from an input port to all output ports, except for a port paired with the input port. This feature is utilized to allow collision detection to be carried out, as detailed in the specification at lines 13-18 of page 11.

The star coupler described in Lahat couples light input to the device to all output ports, as described at lines 26-33, column 8, and line 25, column 9. This type of coupler is also described in the background to the present invention at lines 4-17 of page 2.

The Applicants respectfully submit that the wording of all independent claims clearly differentiates the present invention according to the above, and that the Examiner's rejection under 35 USC § 102 cannot be sustained.

The apparatus of Lahat does not require a coupler as disclosed in the present invention, since a scheduler (lines 16-23, column 9) that checks for collisions is provided. This is possible since the apparatus is all co-located, in contrast to the present invention which is concerned with diversely located transmitters, making the use of a single scheduler undesirable.

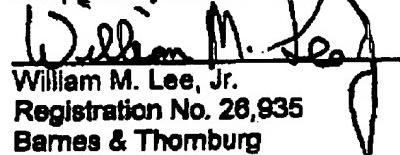
Since the apparatus of Lahat does not require a coupler as disclosed in the present invention, nor suggests that such a coupler may be required in any situation, there is no reason for a person skilled in the art to arrive at such a coupler from the teachings of Lahat. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the present invention is not obvious over the teachings of Lahat.

All independent claims contain the feature that each input port is coupled to all output ports except its corresponding output port, therefore the above remarks apply to all claims of the present invention.

In light of the above the Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are novel and not obvious in view of Lahat and are therefore allowable. Such action is therefore solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,


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